

THE PROCESSES OF CONSTRUCTING A PLACE-BASED IDENTITY:

THE EXPERIENCE OF RESIDENTS IN THE MUNICIPALITIES OF
CABO DE SANTO AGOSTINHO AND IPOJUCA, PERNAMBUCO, BRAZIL

PROCESSOS DE CONFIGURAÇÃO IDENTITÁRIA COM O LUGAR:

A EXPERIÊNCIA DE RESIDENTES DOS MUNICÍPIOS DE
CABO DE SANTO AGOSTINHO E IPOJUCA, PERNAMBUCO, BRASIL

HELENILDA WANDERLEI DE VASCONCELOS CAVALCANTI^{A, E, F}
Fundação Joaquim Nabuco, Diretoria de Pesquisas Sociais, Recife, PE, Brasil

BRENO BITTENCOURT SANTOS^{A, B, C}
Faculdade de Ciências Humanas e Sociais de Serra Talhada, Curso de Serviço Social, Serra Talhada, PE, Brasil

ABSTRACT: Identity and place are subjective concepts related to the intrinsic feelings of each individual, the meanings of which are derived from the multiple interactions between people and their dwelling places. By examining which factors are involved and to what extent they may influence the process through which individuals construct an identity with the places in which they live, we have sought to analyze the process involved in constructing a place-based identity, with residents in the municipalities of Cabo de Santo Agostinho and Ipojuca. For this, we have used quantitative methods, especially descriptive data analyzes, and produced a statistical index so as to investigate the processes involved in constructing a place-based identity associated to a sense of belonging to the municipalities in which they live. Through our results, we have verified that factors such as age, migration status and the time spent living in the municipality have influenced the manner in which individuals construct a sense of belonging to the place they live.

KEYWORDS: identity; place; belonging; socio-spatial dynamics; migration.

RESUMO: *Identidade e lugar são conceitos subjetivos relacionados com os sentimentos intrínsecos a cada indivíduo, cujos significados se vinculam às múltiplas interações entre pessoas e espaços. Partindo do questionamento a respeito de quais fatores e de sua influência no processo de configuração identitária dos indivíduos com os lugares em que vivem, buscamos analisar o processo de construção identitária com o lugar de residentes dos municípios de Cabo de Santo Agostinho e Ipojuca, Pernambuco. Para isso, utilizamos métodos de natureza quantitativa, especialmente algumas análises descritivas e a construção de um índice estatístico para investigar processos de configuração identitária associados ao sentimento de pertencimento aos municípios de residência. Como resultados, verificamos que fatores como grupo etário, condição de migração e tempo de residência no município apresentam influência no sentimento de pertencimento dos indivíduos aos lugares em que vivem.*

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *identidade; lugar; pertencimento; dinâmicas socioespaciais; migração.*

Contribution of each author: **A.** theoretical and conceptual basis and problematization; **B.** research data and statistical analysis; **C.** producing figures and tables; **D.** photographs; **E.** preparation and drafting of manuscript; **F.** selection of references.

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INTRODUCTION

Identity and place are concepts that relate to the intrinsic feelings of each specific individual, the meanings of which derive from the multiple interactions between people and their dwelling places. In this article, we propose to investigate the processes of constructing a place-based identity, determining which factors are involved and the extent to which they influence the sense of belonging that individuals feel towards the place they live. The quantitative research was conducted in 2014 in the municipalities of Cabo de Santo Agostinho and Ipojuca, where the Port of Suape Industrial Complex (known as CIPS) is located.

The CIPS is an industrial complex consisting of a maritime port and a logistics park that, specifically since 2007, has attracted companies of varying sizes and operational scales to the municipalities of Cabo de Santo Agostinho and Ipojuca, which are both predominantly structured for agro-industries and sugarcane, located to the south of the Metropolitan Region Of Recife, Pernambuco, Northeast Brazil. Between 2007 and 2012, due to the expansion process that took place at the CIPS, Cabo de Santo Agostinho and Ipojuca experienced rapid economic growth, a sharp rise in contracted labor and an increase in workers' incomes which, for these very reasons, attracted large contingents of the population. Following this period of rapid expansion however, the two municipalities then went on to register a move in the opposite direction, with a sharp economic slowdown, massive layoffs, increased poverty and migratory movements out of the region (CAVALCANTI; SOUZA; OLIVEIRA, 2015).

This scenario of socio-economic change brought about significant alterations in migratory movements, which were mainly composed of immigrants who arrived and settled in the region due to the opportunities offered by the local labor market, of emigrants who were no longer able to find work on the local labor market and of increasing contingents of the population, who despite remaining outside the labor market, have continued in the region searching for opportunities (CAVALCANTI; SOUZA; OLIVEIRA, 2015). It should therefore be emphasized that this complex set of socio-economic and demographic changes may, in turn, have impacted the processes experienced by individuals in constructing an identity with their dwelling place. Since Cabo de Santo Agostinho and Ipojuca have stimulated the coexistence of different groups of inhabitants, all with completely different characteristics, both municipalities have become a privileged locus for analyzing the relationships that exist between socio-economic characteristics, types of migrants and the construction of a place-based identity.

Based on a theoretical-methodological perspective where the values and meanings that individuals bring to the places in which they live are also influenced by economic, demographic, psychosocial and cultural changes and processes (WEIL, 1979; HOLZER, 1999; TUAN, 2013), we have sought to analyze the possible relationships that exist between these factors and the processes involved in constructing a place-based identity in the municipalities of Cabo de Santo Agostinho and Ipojuca¹.

The article is composed of a theoretical-conceptual discussion regarding identity and place, a description of the methodology used during the research and finally, a presentation and discussion of the main results obtained. As an analytical conclusion, the study demonstrates that migration and the time a migrant has lived in the region are primordial factors in the process of constructing a place-base identity.

¹ This article partly results from the reflections constructed throughout the research "Impacts of the Suape Port Industrial Complex (CIPS): migration, work, living conditions, identity and new territorialities" (CAVALCANTI; SOUZA; OLIVEIRA, 2015).

CONSTRUCTING IDENTITIES AND RELATIONSHIPS WITH A PLACE

Identity and place are interwoven, inseparable concepts. Both are made up of complex intersubjective processes, through which individuals attribute meaning, values and sense to themselves, to others and to the places where they live out their most intimate experiences.

There is no consensus as to the meaning of identity. From the outset, we are in agreement with the anthropological focus, which is based on the perspective of relational analysis: identity is understood as a social construction formed by subjects arranged in relation to one another, thus emphasizing the elements of otherness, i.e., the individual qualities that are constituted through relations of contrasts, distinctions or differences (TODOROV, 1983, 1993). Similarly, social psychology provides evidence that the construction of identity has a relational and social character, and is gestated in the individual. Identity may be constructed through elements that are in opposition, such as the contingency character of similarities and differences within situations of individuals/groups (CAVALCANTI, 1999). The relational perspective has also been addressed by Deschamps and Moliner (2004), who emphasized the sociological and psychological aspects of identity, both marked by the similarities and differences that individuals feel in relation to one another. This provides identity with a dynamic subjective character, which results, we would repeat, from the double confirmation of the similarities and differences of subjects between themselves and others.

Identity may also be constructed from the oppositions that individuals encounter in their everyday social situations and that act on the processes that intervene in the construction of knowledge and beliefs regarding themselves and others, as well as any group to which they may or may not belong. The coordination of these seemingly opposing and contradictory dimensions is necessary in order to overcome the individual/social dichotomy, which is part of the problematics concerning identity.

One important aspect that to highlight in studies on identity is that it should be presented as something that moves in consonance with the new meanings that are constantly adjoined to everyday life, thereby causing the existence of individuals to become qualitatively different. However, this difference may pass unperceived when events occur slowly and discontinuously, because it is through the accumulation of movements over time that aspects of identity then become perceived as change. It is, therefore, a process of human activity constantly under construction because the reality of the each individual's experience of life produces the conditions of possibility for her/his own life. The concrete reality is, accordingly, history and dialectic action, which, in the midst of gains and losses, leads individuals to a future marked by certain aspects that have been generated socially and within themselves (CAVALCANTI, 1999).

As with the notion of identity, the concept of place also has no universal meaning. Here we highlight the perspective that Holzer (1999) classifies as **phenomenological**, i.e., that in which the definition of place considers incorporating the subjectivities that individuals imprint onto their meaningful intersubjective relations. For this kind of approach, it is necessary to begin from a conceptual distinction between space and place, which is an indistinct physical location. However, insofar as individuals construct values, sense and meanings

within the relations that occur with it and within it, it may thereby become a place (HOLZER, 1999; TUAN, 2013):

“Space” is more abstract than “place.” What begins as undifferentiated space becomes place as we get to know it better and endow it with value [...]. The ideas “space” and “place” require each other for definition. From the security and stability of place we are aware of the openness, freedom, and threat of space, and vice versa. Furthermore, if we think of space as that which allows movement, then place is pause; each pause in movement makes it possible for location to be transformed into place (TUAN, 2013, p. 6).

Within this perspective, place signifies much more than just any physical location. Although it may be identified with a space, it is the center of subjective meanings, a special entity whose history and meaning are collectively constructed by intersubjective experiences (TUAN, 2013). Place therefore, may begin as a space, but acquires symbolic meaning from the values that are constructed through the successive relationships that unfold within it and about it, transforming it, modifying it and giving it a collective personality (HOLZER, 1999, TUAN, 2013). As Holzer (1999) and Tuan (2013) emphasize, for an indistinct space to acquire the sense of place, it is fundamental that individuals construct stable temporal relations with it. It is only through extensive knowledge and the construction of meanings, senses and values that individuals establish relationships of familiarity with a place, expressing deep, emotional relationships and contacts with it, rendering it irreplaceable within their own individual history.

Finally, we should emphasize that there is also a notion of hierarchy amongst places. According to Tuan (2013), individuals may construct various relationships with places, thus recognizing and valuing them within a scale of importance that arises from the emotional load developed with them.

The processes involving the construction, meaning and value of identities and places occur similarly and, to a certain extent, complement one another. Distinct interdisciplinary fields address the theme of connections between identities and place (DARTE, LIMA, 2005; MOREIRA, HESPANHOL, 2007), focusing on migratory issues (CASTELLS, 1999, HAESBAERT 1999, CAVALCANTI 1999, CUNHA et al., DANTAS et al., 2010), as we shall demonstrate.

Some theoretical references regarding the interchange between identity and place, amongst other topics, have focused on the connection of the former with the environmental transformations that have resulted from different processes of globalization - local, regional, national or international. Indeed, many approaches are based on identification with place using discussions about how it satisfies the collective and individual needs or how certain specificities differentiate it from other places within the context of globalization (KORPELA, 1989; GUSTAFSON, 2001).

Other studies (MARANDOLLA JR.; DAL GALLO, 2009) have addressed the phenomenon of identity based on population movements, i.e., on migrations, which in our particular case have been driven by the search for work, and have tended to face the problematics of adapting to a new location. The adaptation process depends, in a sense, on the migrant's relationship with the place of destination. Several strategies are put into action so that migrants are able to compensate for the sense of disconnection and uprooting to which they have been exposed. In other words, these strategies make

up for the absence of genuine, active, natural participation in an existing collectiveness that keeps alive certain treasures from the past and presentiments of the future (WEIL, 1979). This feeling of loss occurs when individuals leave the conviviality of certain elements dear to their human existence, thereby impacting their territorial identity and their existential safety (WEIL, 1979). This place, which is so important to them, is the place where they live, the place where they die, and where they bury the dead, the place where an individual's own community experience is defined, thereby offering a sense of belonging to something.

McMillan and Chavis (apud GARCÍA, GIULIANI, WIESENFELD, 2002) highlight four elements that define the sense of community, in which they emphasize the feeling of belonging. The first element is the **sense of membership** that someone feels on being part of that community. This feeling is characterized by emotional safety – related to feeling sufficiently safe to build an affective bond with the place, and identifying that it is possible to share the same social and cultural reality of that place with others. The second element refers to **influence**, which is determined by the ability of a community member to influence and be influenced by community life. The third element refers to being concerned with the **integration and fulfillment of the personal and collective needs** of the community members. The fourth and final element is the **shared emotional connection** in which, what matters is the shared experience of symbols that contain special meaning to the individuals of a place.

Several other complementary elements may also be added, such as a **network of mutual support relationships, community participation to solve common difficulties**, among others. Based on these categories, immigrants, for example, in order to balance their conditions of belonging to a new place, begin to mobilize tactics that are likely to restore their well-being and a sense of belonging, thereby striving to “construct new places” or maintain links to their origins. In the first case, they may indeed construct their own places, which refer to a social network from their place of origin.

It is important to emphasize the dialogue that takes place in the study between the social identity of migrants and non-migrants and geography and urban issues, since migration itself is a geographical phenomenon with territorial and existential implications. Migration involves processes of deterritorialization and reterritorialization, which are not necessarily successive or ordered. In this respect, Marandola Jr. and Dal Gallo (2009) adopt a different position from that of Haesbaert (2007). While the second focuses on understanding the implications of migration for groups and collectivities, the former focuses on existence, considering groups and the resulting collectivity. They demonstrate that, in ontological terms, existential security and territorial identity are rocked, and need to be understood as central elements of the migration process. This is an interesting position for the debate conducted in this article since it links some of the abovementioned elements, such as the impact on **territorial identity** and the **existential security** of community members - aspects that are analyzed herein based on the variables used throughout our research.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND ANALYSIS OF THE VARIABLES INVOLVED IN CONSTRUCTING A PLACE-BASED IDENTITY

The majority of research into identity and place is developed according to methodological orientations of a qualitative nature, given that the creation and attribution of values and meanings that result in the construction of identity and place are based on intersubjective processes. However, in accordance with the underlying basis of this article, we present some of the results obtained from a quantitative methodology.

The so-called “methodological divide”, i.e., the disputes between, on the one hand, the quantitative methodological approach, derived from the naturalistic perspective of human sciences and uncritically incorporated by the positivists and, on the other, the qualitative approach, arising from a humanist/culturalist perspective, for which human science needs its own methodology to construct its knowledge, has occupied a significant part of scientific discussion, favoring the development of different methodological approaches, in which the humanist paradigm has triumphed (GIDDENS, 1979; HABERMAS, 2008; GADAMER, 2011). We agree with the humanistic perspective, especially its ontological and epistemological presuppositions, according to which the object of human sciences is historical, socially constructed and eminently discursive, necessitating, therefore, to be understood through the intersubjectivities and reflexivities of the subjects (GIDDENS, 1979; HABERMAS, 2008; GADAMER, 2011). Nevertheless, we would emphasize that in many cases the exercise of understanding intersubjective and discursive interpretations may be based on quantitative methods. This is not due to the supposed capacity of quantitative strategies to capture regularities and construct generalizations regarding social phenomena (GIDDENS, 1979). Using a quantitative method in human sciences is justified by the fact that it may be a strategy that captures the discourses and positions of subjects through synthetic operations, such as questionnaires, in which subjects provide reflective fragments of their perceptions and opinions regarding a particular item. In the analytical phases, these fragments should be collected, recomposed and examined according to the coherences and inconsistencies expressed throughout the multiple responses captured. It should also be stated that most quantitative research in human sciences has already abandoned the positivist delusions of objectivity, regularity and generality and has become inserted into the humanistic perspective of sciences, by seeking to offer ways for the approximation, construction and analysis of intersubjective discourses constructed by reflexive subjects. Thus, although the “hegemonic” perspective of identity and place studies is based on a qualitative perspective, we have attempted to follow a kind of “anti-hegemonic perspective” which is anchored in the humanistic assumption that science is not dogmatic: it is an open experience of contraries, in which the pathways may either prove fruitful or result in absolute failure.

In this article, we have used data from a research study coordinated by Cavalcanti, Souza and Oliveira (2015), based on a non-probability² sample of 786 residents in the municipalities of Cabo de Santo Agostinho and Ipojuca. From this sample, we have performed two types of analysis: 1) descriptive analyzes of the variables that relate to a place-based identity; and 2) composite index analyzes to compose the *identity index*³.

2 Non-probability sampling involves subsets of populations that do not present statistical security capable of affirming that the results are representative of the population universes studied (LEVIN, 1987).

3 The composite indices constitute aggregates of variables that, using the Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient method, group together variables that bring robustness and reliability to the desired statistical index. Through Cronbach's alpha coefficient, it is possible to analyze the strength and direction of the correlations between variables that compose a statistical index, and to estimate the extent to which the variables used in a questionnaire can actually infer what is proposed in the context studied (LEVIN, 1987; MARTINS, 2006).

The research sample was built from a selection of permanent private occupied households located in the urban areas of Cabo de Santo Agostinho and Ipojuca. In the first municipality, the areas related to the municipal center and the districts of Cabo de Santo Agostinho and Ponte dos Carvalhos were included. In the second, the areas related to the center and districts of Camela and Nossa Senhora do Ó were included. For the sample composition, based on information from the Brazilian Demographic Census of 2010 on the location of migrants in the census tracts of the municipalities of Cabo de Santo Agostinho and Ipojuca, a survey was carried out through which approximately 5,000 permanent private households occupied by at least one migrant were identified and mapped. The decision to select households based on the existence of at least one migrant resident was due to the objective of seeking to make comparisons between migrants and non-migrants. From the results of the survey, questionnaires were applied to 805 households, respecting criteria of randomness in their choice. At the end of the process, 786 questionnaires were considered valid (CAVALCANTI; SOUZA; OLIVEIRA, 2015).

Returning to the above-mentioned types of analysis, we would stress that descriptive analyzes are statistical operations that make it possible to characterize the individuals selected in the sample. Once this has been completed, it is then possible to present the results and connect them with specific theoretical orientations. In turn, with the *identity index*, it is possible to produce a scale that is able to evaluate the extent to which individuals have an attachment to the place where they live, which, once again, provides theoretical connections capable of demonstrating the reasons that have guided this type of attachment.

For the specific examination of place-based identity, we selected the following variables⁴: a desire to leave the municipality; works in the municipality; place where registered to vote and where the dead are buried. The purpose of these questions is to identify the extent to which research participants experience the municipalities in which they live, thus attempting to capture the sense of place, i.e., the degree of attraction or rejection and the familiarity or estrangement that people feel towards these cities (WEIL, 1979; HOLZER, 1999; MARANDOLLA JR.; DAL GALLO, 2009; TUAN, 2013).

The desire to leave or stay in the municipality may reflect the (in)satisfactions that people feel towards the city, which necessarily will impact their desire to either stay or move away. On the other hand, living and working in the same city may represent a strengthening of ties: a city provides individuals with both a place to live and a source of work, thus confining their more frequent, intimate relationships - factors which help to construct an individual's feeling of belonging to the place they live. Whether or not an individual chooses to register to vote in the city of residence expresses the desire to participate collectively in decisions of the city. Finally, burying the dead can be a means of verifying where an individual's deepest relationships lie, since almost always, wherever individuals decide to bury their dead is the place they have created or endeavored to create their roots.

Evidently, as Tuan (2013) indicates, we are mindful of the fact that constructing a city as a place depends on the time spent living there and the emotional ties that are established with it. This is precisely one of the dimensions that we desired to capture, since we are interested in discovering which factors are involved and how they have contributed to strengthening the sense of belonging that individuals develop towards the city.

⁴ The variables were chosen through field observations from the qualitative research, and were later improved in a Multidisciplinary Theoretical-Methodological Seminar. This entire process occurred within the framework of the abovementioned research coordinated by Cavalcanti, Souza and Oliveira (2015).

The socioeconomic and demographic variables, i.e., those that may theoretically influence the performance of variables related to identity, were determined according to the municipality of residence (Cabo de Santo Agostinho or Ipojuca), gender (male or female), age group (young, adult or older person) migration status (migrant or non-migrant), the time of migration and the relationship with the head of the household.

For the composition of the “age group” variable, we introduced parameters proposed by the World Health Organization (WHO) and adopted in official Brazilian instruments, such as the Child and Adolescent Statute, the National Youth Council and the Statute for Older People, which consider young people as being aged between 18 and 29 years, adults as those aged between 30 and 59 years and older people as those aged 60 years or over. In the “migration status” variable, the parameter we used was the place of birth presented in the Brazilian Demographic Census of 2010, from the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE). A non-migrant was considered as anyone who was born and had always lived in the current municipality of residence. A migrant, was considered as anyone who had not been born in the current municipality of residence or who, despite being born there, had lived in some other municipality. Finally, the variable “time spent living in the municipality”, the parameter for which was also taken from the Brazilian Demographic Census of 2010, was used as a complement variable so as to refine the investigation regarding the phenomenon of migration. We considered those migrants who had lived in the current municipality for a maximum period of three years as being “recent”, those who have lived in the current municipality of residence between four and nine years as being “mid-term”; and migrants who had resided for at least 10 years in the current municipality of residence as “established”.

In assigning weights, to the answers that demonstrate a feeling of belonging to the dwelling place – which in this case of analysis was the municipality –, the assigned value was 10 (ten). Answers that presented a feeling of not belonging to the place of residence received a value of 0 (zero). The process of assigning weights raises the measurement level of the variables, moving from the nominal level to the interval level. This operation is indispensable in composing statistical indices.

After assigning the weights, the Cronbach Alpha test was performed. The simultaneous use of the four variables related to the theme of identity (the desire to leave the municipality; working in the municipality; the place registered to vote and where the dead are buried) resulted in a composite index, for which Cronbach's alpha test obtained a value of 0.570 (on a scale of 0 to 1) - a value considered moderate by the specialized literature on statistical procedures of this type (LEVIN, 1987). Given this result, we decided to discover whether all the variables were contributing to the robustness of the index or, conversely, whether any of them decreased reliability. Analyzes indicated that the variable “place of work” negatively affected the composition of the index. Withdrawal of this variable increased the value of Cronbach's alpha test to 0.680, demonstrating that, despite its theoretical importance, such a variable could not be included in the composition of the identity index.

In accordance with its composition process, the identity index was then calculated by adding the values of each of the variables and thereby, dividing the result by three. To facilitate the interpretation of the numbers obtained in the calculation and the analysis of the identity index, we decided to group the numerical values of the identity index of the participants of the sample into ranges between 0 (zero) and 10 (ten). Individuals who presented an index range of 4 or under were considered as

low identity. Index values between 4.01 and 6.99 were listed as medium identity and finally, the highest range of identity was recorded with values between 7 and 10.

DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSES ON PLACE-BASED IDENTITY

In the sample of 786 residents from the municipalities of Cabo de Santo Agostinho and Ipojuca, 61.2% of those interviewed expressed a desire to remain in the municipality in which they live, and 38.8% expressed a desire to leave. These figures illustrate that most residents wished to remain in the municipality where they live, which indicates that people, for certain reasons, identified in some manner or another with their dwelling place. Therefore, the possible reasons for these different results need to be investigated.

There is no doubt that a place-based identity is not simply confined to the desire of either remaining or leaving a dwelling place. Nonetheless, the fact that the majority of residents living in one place manifest the desire to remain there may be an indication that such a place stimulates a sense of belonging, satisfies certain personal and collective needs, and/or activates some emotional connection with the individual (WEIL, 1979; HOLZER, 1999; MARANDOLA JR.; DAL GALLO, 2009; TUAN, 2013).

When separating the answers of the interviewees regarding the desire to move away according to the municipality of residence, we observed a slight difference between the number of people who wished to move away from Cabo de Santo Agostinho and from Ipojuca. In Cabo de Santo Agostinho, just over half of the respondents (56.6%) stated they had no desire to leave the municipality, against 43.4% who did. Therefore, there is almost an equivalency in the responses from the municipality of Cabo de Santo Agostinho. In Ipojuca, however, this was less so: 65.4% declared their desire to remain, while 34.6% expressed the desire to move away. Ipojuca, therefore, is prominent in that two thirds of the interviewees declared a desire to remain in the municipality.

Data regarding the proportion of people who wish to stay in the municipality of residence may indicate some force of attraction that the place exerts over the respondents, and may also demonstrate some strong relation with the identity that people have with it. Thus, the place may represent a quality regarding the **fulfillment of the personal and collective needs** of the researched group, i.e., it offers either the material conditions or the social networks that favor the fulfillment of the population's needs.

However, the proportion of people wishing to leave the area is still relatively high, and therefore caution is needed when claiming that the place has the requisites to encourage people to stay. As we have observed, just over 1/3 of the population interviewed expressed the desire to move away, which could be taken to indicate their frustration with the place they live.

The results concerning the desire to move away or remain in the municipality according to the gender of the residents demonstrated a certain homogeneous distribution, with the number of men (42%) being slightly higher when compared to the women (39%).

With regard to the desire to move away according to age groups, the figures revealed that young people represent the largest proportion of those who wish to move

away from the municipality where they live (51.5%), followed by adults (40.2%) and then older people (20%). These percentages are of no surprise since, in general, young people tend to aspire to new experiences, many of which are related to their desire to move to another state or country in search of better opportunities of study and work; items which are strongly linked to the desire to achieve physical and emotional independence as well as freedom. In contrast, older people are more likely to resist moving away from where they live.

When analyzing data on the desire to move away or remain in a place due to the condition of being a migrant or non-migrant, we found that 72.5% of those born in these municipalities, that is, non-migrants, expressed the desire to leave. Only 27% of this group stated their desire to remain where they lived. In the case of migrants, 58.3% stressed their intention to leave, with 41.7% of the interviewees expressing their intention to stay in the chosen place of migration. Undoubtedly, there are several reasons why people are either satisfied or dissatisfied with where they live, and which clearly influences their desire to stay or leave.

The information that migrants present the highest proportion of those who wish to remain where they are may indicate the **saturation point of the migrant's willingness to migrate again**. This signifies that migrants, especially those who migrate for economic reasons, i.e., seeking work opportunities, at some point in their lives, feel the need to interrupt their migratory dynamics and settle, definitively, in a determined place. In this case, factors such as family and an emotional support network - both constructed in the place - tend to be decisive factors in choosing to remain (BECKER, 2006).

Some hypotheses may be suggested for the fact that there is a smaller proportion of migrants among those who wish to move away. Firstly, the operationalization of the variable **migration status** (non-migrant/migrant), when accounting for all those individuals who were not born in their current municipality of residence, may inflate the results. With regard to this, the research data demonstrated that 37.7% of the migrants were born in the surrounding municipalities of Cabo de Santo Agostinho and Ipojuca. Besides the geographical proximity, it is important to highlight that until a few years ago, with the exception of Cabo de Santo Agostinho and Jaboatão dos Guararapes, there were no maternity hospitals in the other surrounding municipalities, which signified that children of people living in these areas were born in neighboring localities. As a result, some of the residents were classified as migrants due to the fact that they were born outside their current municipalities, when in reality some of these residents had actually lived in the city where they were at the time of the survey throughout their entire lives.

It is important to emphasize that the model used to construct the variable "migration status" comes from the variable "municipality of birth", as proposed and used by the IBGE. Operational and analytical problems of this type, i.e., considering people who were born in other municipalities but who had spent most of their lives in other municipalities as migrants, should be circumvented through the use of complement variables, such as the variable "time spent living in the municipality", and qualitative analyzes. With the variable "time spent living in the municipality", which is also used in this study, it is possible to relativize the migration status: despite being born in another location, the relations that individuals have with the place make them "established" due to the time they have lived in the municipality.

In the case of “time spent living in the municipality”, 72.5% of the people considered as migrants have lived for more than 7 years in Cabo de Santo Agostinho and 71% in Ipojuca. The percentage of those who have lived between 3 and 7 years in Cabo de Santo Agostinho is 12.9% and in Ipojuca 15.4%, and for those who have lived for 3 years or under, the percentage is 14, 7% in Cabo de Santo Agostinho and 13.6% in Ipojuca.

The numbers from the research illustrate that the majority of migrants have lived for a long time in the municipalities surveyed. This leads us to consider that a longer migrant status may signify that this group has a stronger emotional tie with the municipality than more recent migrants (TUAN, 2013). By being exposed to adversity in a strange place, long-term migrants undergo a process of resilience, which activates the conditions for having something to believe in and to fight for. Time also helps to form support networks for existential and affective security through creating a place to live. Based on deeper interviews, we may state that some migrants have suffered considerably so that they have become hybrid beings: they have absorbed both the culture of the new place and taken their previous culture with them.

In turn, people who were born in the two municipalities and desired to move away felt subjected to a kind of expulsion with the arrival of new residents. All the registered changes, particularly in Cabo de Santo Agostinho, have brought great inconveniences to the older residents. In the interviews, residents who felt most strongly attached to local tradition complained that the environment had become more precarious in terms of cultural decharacterization with the presence of “strangers.” There were also complaints concerning greater uncertainty in accessing public services, security and mobility.

Another variable chosen in the study of the place-based identity was the “place of work”. Work is one of the main factors that stimulates mobility, since it is the number one rule for achieving citizenship (SAYAD, 1998). Through work, it is possible to capture people’s social identity with the place or with whatever is associated with it, especially if they work in the vicinity of the areas where they live.

When we asked, “Do you work in or outside the municipality?”, we wished to discover how closely people are positioned to their neighborhood networks. By examining this, it is possible to observe how the sharing of objectives and procedures comes about, as well as the important opportunities and interactions that individuals maintain with the various local groups and instances, through which the horizontal links and interdependence and complementarity bonds are strengthened. In our particular case, we also wished to know how the municipalities offer local employment opportunities to the resident population.

A total of 85.4% of respondents declared that they were employed within the municipality itself - only 14.6% of them worked outside. However, when we disaggregated the data, considering each of the municipalities, we perceived that in Ipojuca, 93.7% of the workers conduct their activities within the municipality. In Cabo de Santo Agostinho, this proportion is somewhat lower: 75.9% of those who work said they did so within the municipality and 24.1% outside.

Data relating to the proportion of people working in or outside the municipality according to the municipality of residence refer to a more detailed analysis of the variable “place of work”. Apparently, the data indicate that people are close to their relationship networks and to neighborhood contacts, from which they obtain

information that helps them to improve both their professional and life qualities, especially in the case of Ipojuca. The “place of work” variable may be considered as explanatory data for the fact that someone desires to remain or move away. The work factor therefore, becomes a strong influential variable in the processes of constructing a place-based identity.

When the analysis was extended to the total number of respondents, the 786 people selected, a total of 418 stated that they were employed, either in or outside the municipality, and 368 did not report whether they were employed, as they were possibly engaged in unpaid activities. The number of people who were not working may be related to the disadvantage of being inserted into the employment of those who live in the municipality in relation to those from outside. This difference may be observed, for example, in the recruitment mechanisms of certain companies, who bring in veritable hordes of workers to take up activities within the region, particularly in the area of construction and in specialties not encountered in the municipalities of the Suape Strategic Territory (TES). Many workers from outside arrive with a previously established link to a labor network, bringing with them work experience of a higher quality, even when performing more menial tasks, which thereby differentiates them in terms of better social capital when compared to the local residents.

In this respect, attention should be drawn to the lack of qualified local labor in the municipalities of TES. Although important, the professional and technological education courses run by the federal and state governments through the “S” System – the National Service for Industrial Learning (Senai) and the National Service for Learning and Commerce (Senac) - and other specific training courses for the activities at CIPS, so that workers may become a more efficient local labor force, first need to deal with the overwhelming lack of basic skills. Without these, it is difficult for the workforce to follow such courses and continue professional training that will bear fruit in the future.

In addition to the question of work, another element that greatly influences people when settling **somewhere or choosing a place to live** is the fact that the place is somehow linked to their history (CUBA; HUMMON, 1993; TUAN, 2013). The considerations of Cuba and Hummon (1993) regarding a place that may be called home, developed from the reflection of “where do I belong?” or “where I am from?”, lead us to consider which types of experiences or events should be examined so that we are able to state that an individual or group belongs to a particular place. To some extent, the variables “where you bury the dead” and “where you are registered to vote” indicate the roots that individuals maintain with a place. They translate their experiences with the place and the special meanings attributed to them through the cycle of life: being born, living and dying.

Data obtained from the research confirm the existence of an attachment between the individuals interviewed and the place where they live. For the answers regarding the “where you bury the dead” variable, we observed that for 73.6% of those interviewed, the dead are buried in the same municipality as where they live and 26.4%, outside the municipality.

When we observe the data from the two municipalities separately, we note that there is only a very slight difference regarding the burial of their dead inside or outside the locality of residence: 71.9%, for Cabo de Santo Agostinho; 74.9%, for Ipojuca. This data reveals that, in both cases, inhabitants have been able to find a place in which

to bury their dead, and that this act of human ritual is a reference to the perceived connection between their loved ones and the land. How many migrants yearn for their bodies to be buried where they were born? “To be born and die in the land where my umbilicus was buried!”⁵ Many migrants fail to achieve this goal at the end of their lives, so family members or friends emblematically bring a little of the homeland as a symbol of the spiritual and emotional bond of the dead with their birthplace.

In the wake of the discussion on variables that would bring about a close connection with people’s place-based identity, we chose the question concerning “the place registered to vote”. This variable comprises the civic act that people exercise in choosing the political representatives of their community, of their city or town. We discovered that the majority of the population of the two municipalities votes in the municipality where they live. This percentage was 84.3% and included migrants and non-migrants who vote in the municipality. The 15.7% of the population that vote outside the municipality represented a smaller portion, and may be composed of more recently-arrived residents in the two municipalities.

When analyzing these data, we observed that both Cabo de Santo Agostinho and Ipojuca presented almost equal results for the proportion of people according to the place where they vote and to the municipality of residence. The fact that the population of these two municipalities, in the main, elect their political representatives in the municipality where they reside, when elections are held, reinforces our idea that there is a strong link between individuals and place - if the result obtained is compared to that of people voting outside the municipality.

ANALYSIS OF THE IDENTITY INDEX AND FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH CONSTRUCTING A PLACE-BASED IDENTITY

In order to advance the investigations regarding place-based identity, we jointly examined the identity index for the municipalities of Cabo de Santo Agostinho and Ipojuca⁶, according to the variables “municipality of residence”, “gender”, “age group”, “migration status” and “migration time”. Our objective was to identify which of these factors are involved and to what extent they may be related to the place-based identity index. The results are presented in Table 1.

From the outset, we emphasize that the residents of Ipojuca tend to have higher levels of place-based identity than those of Cabo de Santo Agostinho, although there is some homogeneity in the proportion of individuals with lower levels. Although this is inconclusive, we would stress that the difference captured in the identity index between the two municipalities needs to be better examined, since it indicates that the residents in Ipojuca, for reasons that need to be investigated, construct feelings of attachment to the place in a greater proportion than those in Cabo de Santo Agostinho. It is therefore important to ascertain which factors may influence this difference regarding identification with place.

Analyzing the identity index according to “gender”, the data reveal a fairly homogeneous distribution of the ranges (low, medium and high) between the two groups, with women tending to present more of a place-based identity than men. While we are unable to establish, as a conclusion, that gender influences the place-

5 Expressed by someone living in São Severino “Dos Macacos” Settlement, in Gravatá, PE, regarding his joy at being “eaten” by the very earth that provided him with the food he “ate” (CAVALCANTI, 1999).

6 Throughout the research, analyzes were performed regarding the identity index for each of the municipalities. The data obtained revealed that there were no significant differences between the two municipalities in the relationships between the “age groups”, “migration status” and “time spent living in the municipality”. These data indicate, therefore, that it is not the municipality of residence that is related to the index of identity, but rather the variables related to age and migratory characteristics (migration status and time living in the municipality). For these reasons, both municipalities were treated jointly herein, without causing any damage to the analyzes.

based identity index, it is clear that the family and friendship networks established by women are more constant than those of men. In the qualitative surveys coordinated by Cavalcanti, Souza and Oliveira (2015) in the municipalities of Cabo de Santo Agostinho and Ipojuca, it was verified that many of the women interviewed were housewives and did not work outside the home. When questioned about their family and friendship networks, especially in the case of migrants, they also expressed the importance of maintaining relationships with family and friends as a way of minimizing their feelings of homesickness.

When the focus is on “age groups”, the results of the research indicate that there is a directly proportional relationship between ages and the identity index: the wider the age gap, the greater the feeling of belonging to the place you live. This signifies that there is a lower concentration of young people in the higher ranges of the place-based identity index and a higher concentration in the lower ranges. In contrast, there is a higher concentration of older people in the higher ranges of the index and a very low one in the lower range. Given this situation, we may state that young people, followed by adults, tend to identify less with the place they live in, and express a desire to move away, while older people build stronger ties with the places in which they live. This empirical result corroborates the theoretical underpinnings, which indicate that constructing a place-based identity depends fundamentally on the length of time and the quality of relations maintained within the place. As Tuan states (2013), it is possible that this latter group of individuals has built deep emotional relationships in order for the city or town to become familiar, i.e., an irreplaceable place.

On the other hand, the results encountered with regard to the “migration status” indicate that individuals born in the municipalities of Cabo de Santo Agostinho and Ipojuca, hence non-migrants, present higher scores on the identity index than migrants: more than 70% of non-migrants presented a high identity index and only slightly more than 3% were in the lowest range of the index. Conversely, among the migrants, less than half presented high identity indices, whereas little more than one quarter of that population was located in the lower range of the identity index. The results indicate, therefore, that non-migrants tend to identify more with the municipality where they live. In a way, these numbers may be explained by the fact that people born in the place, because of all their biographical elements, usually feel emotionally linked to where they were born and still live (TUAN, 2013).

In addition, it should be mentioned that the results obtained from the identity index show a strong contrast with the results obtained for the variable “desire to leave the municipality”, when analyzed according to the “migration status”. In this variable, there is a higher proportion of non-migrants (72.5%) than migrants (58.4%), which preliminarily indicates that this group identifies less with the municipality. However, the data also reveal that the non-migrant group scores higher on the identity index than migrants. The explanation for this inversion is precisely due to the influence of the variables “place of work” and “where the dead are buried”, which indicates that the non-migrants, to a greater extent, work and bury their dead in the municipalities of residence.

In general, the results corroborate the arguments of Weil (1979), Holzer (1999), Becker (2006) and Tuan (2013) that the construction of intersubjective relations and emotional ties which constitute the feelings of place, i.e., of belonging, of creating roots, demands a long period of time. For this reason, non-migrants living in Cabo

de Santo Agostinho and Ipojuca have developed emotional and identity ties that are much more constant than migrants, who need more time to develop affective relationships and construct meanings with the place.

We also analyzed the variable “time spent living in the municipality”. In this aspect, Cabo de Santo Agostinho concentrates a greater proportion of migrants than Ipojuca. We believe that this has influenced the differences in the identity index captured in the two cities. Thus, people residing in Ipojuca have higher scores on the place-based identity index because most of them have historical and affective relationships with the place.

Finally, we analyzed the relationship between identity and migration among the migrants through “time spent living in the municipality”. In both cases, the results demonstrated the existence of a proportional relationship between the time spent living in the municipality and the identity index: the longer people live in a place, the more they identify with it, which corroborates the arguments that it takes time for individuals to develop emotional relationships capable of transforming space into place. In this sense, even for migrants, the time taken to establish relations with the place appears to be a primordial factor in constructing an identity with the place. The city or town, once strange and threatening, takes on the contours of place the more that individuals capture and recognize the dynamics of everyday experiences. (WEIL, 1979; HOLZER, 1999; BECKER, 2006; TUAN, 2013).

Table 1: Cabo de Santo Agostinho and Ipojuca – Ranges of the identity index according to the variables of interest, 2015

Independent variables		Ranges of the identity index (%)			Total
		Low	Medium	High	
Municipal of residence	Cabo de Santo Agostinho	23.5	32.9	43.6	100
	Ipojuca	20.5	22.0	57.5	100
Gender	Male	26.3	24.3	49.4	100
	Female	19.2	28.7	52.1	100
Age group	Young	29.5	33.9	36.6	100
	Adult	24.5	26.3	49.2	100
	Older person	2.7	23.4	73.9	100
Migration status	Non-migrant	3.4	24.7	71.9	100
	Migrant	26.6	27.2	45.6	100
Time spent living in the municipality	Recent	82.3	16.1	1.6	100
	Mid-term	48.0	31.4	20.6	100
	Established	12.5	28.6	58.9	100

Source: Adapted from Cavalcanti, Souza and Oliveira (2015).

CONCLUSIONS

The elements considered in this study with regard to place-based identity, synthesized in the variables “desire to leave the municipality”, “works in the municipality”, “place where registered to vote” and “place where the dead are buried”, were selected in order to understand which factors are involved and how they influence

the process of constructing a place-based identity in the municipalities of Cabo de Santo Agostinho and Ipojuca.

As presented, a place-based identity results from a set of relationships segmented by an individual's successive experiences and life events within the place, i.e., people identify, to different degrees, with several spaces simultaneously. The degree of identification with each of these places is determined by a variety of intersubjective contents, resulting both from the interpretation of a place and the construction of meanings and values of experiences with it and inside it (CUBA, HUMMON, 1993, HOLZER, 1999, TUAN, 2013).

Based on a specific case involving the municipalities of Cabo de Santo Agostinho and Ipojuca, we have seen that the processes of constructing a place-based identity depends on an interwoven set of demographic and psychosocial factors, among which we have emphasized the individual's "age group", "migration status" (non-migrant and migrant) and "time spent living in the municipality" (recent, mid-term and established).

The results obtained indicate the possible impacts that the activities at CIPS have triggered in the processes of constructing a place-based identity in the abovementioned municipalities. As we have discovered, variables relating to migration have a significant influence on the process of constructing a place-based identity.

The analyzed data also revealed that the groups that most desired to stay where they are living were the non-migrants and older migrants. The latter group tends to be more structured within the place, since they have built a base for their life through work and affective relationships. Over time, they have acquired cultural habits similar to those of the locals, either in the rituals of burying the dead in the place where they live, or in relation to other ways of dealing with the place. Moreover, in the process of adapting, they have also gained the category of citizenship in the place, being free to choose their representatives through voting. In this way, as Sayad (1998) upholds, people gradually transform the place to their image and, at the same time, submit and adapt themselves to new things and new culture, thus constituting a hybrid multicultural community, which presents differences on several levels, when compared to that of the residents who were born in the place.

In common with this, the factors examined reflect **time**: the time it takes for individuals to become intimate with places; the time necessary for the city to cease being an undifferentiated space and become transformed into an object of people's attention, to the point that it becomes their root (WEIL, 1979), a pause in their movement (TUAN, 2013), or better still, the place in which and with which more intimate intersubjective relations are established, through which it is transformed into a place, which is irreplaceable (Holzer, 1999, Tuan, 2013).

Helenilda Wanderlei de Vasconcelos Cavalcanti graduated in Psychology at the Faculdade Frassinetti do Recife (FAFIRE); she has a PhD in Social Psychology from the Universidade de São Paulo (USP); and is a researcher at the Diretoria de Pesquisas Sociais da Fundação Joaquim Nabuco (FUNDAJ).
E-mail: helenilda.cavalcanti@fundaj.gov.br

Breno Bittencourt Santos graduated in Social Sciences, has a Master degree and Doctorate in Sociology from the Universidade Federal de Pernambuco (UFPE); he is a lecturer in Social Services at the Faculdade de Ciências Humanas e Sociais in Serra Talhada (FACHUSST).
E-mail: brenobt@yahoo.com.br

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